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This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A hot plate unit useable for heating a wafer comprising:

a casing having a bottom and a first opened portion;

a ceramic nitride or ceramic carbide hot plate arranged in the first opened portion and having an upper surface opposed to the wafer and a bottom surface opposed to the bottom of the casing and on which a heating element is attached, wherein the hot plate and the casing define a space in which a cooling fluid flows; and

an intake port attached to the bottom of the casing for enabling the intake of the cooling fluid inside the casing, wherein the intake port faces the bottom surface of the hot plate, and wherein a plurality of second openings to which nothing is connected are formed in the bottom of the casing.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously amended) The hot plate unit according to claim 1, wherein the intake port includes a plurality of intake ports.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously amended) The hot plate unit according to claim 3, wherein the fluid includes air.

6. (Currently amended) A hot plate unit comprising:

a ceramic nitride or ceramic carbide hot plate having a first surface, for heating a wafer;

a heating element attached on a second surface of the hot plate; and

a low-heat capacity casing for supporting the hot plate and for covering the heating element, wherein the casing includes a bottom facing the second surface of the hot plate, a first opened portion

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covered by the hot plate, an intake port attached to the bottom of the casing for enabling the intake of a cooling fluid inside the casing, and a plurality of second openings formed in the bottom of the casing for discharging the cooling fluid from the casing and for lowering heat capacity of the bottom of the casing, wherein the second openings are free from any connections.

7. (Previously presented) The hot plate unit according to claim 1, wherein the heating element is formed on the bottom surface of the hot plate.

8. (Previously presented) The hot plate unit according to claim 6, wherein the intake port faces the heating element.

9. (Cancelled)